

The Patriot Ledger, Fri. Dec. 29, 1995

Aquariums suspected source of weeds clogging two ponds

By John Chaffee
The Patriot Ledger

DUXBURY — An plant from home aquariums is suspected as the primary source of weeds that have been choking Island Creek and Lower Chandler Ponds.

"Both ponds suffer from excessive growths of fanwort, an invasive and rooted plant that may have been introduced by people who dumped their aquariums into the ponds," Conservation Administrator Joe Grady said.

In reviewing the findings of recently completed environmental studies of the two ponds, Grady said that while septic seepage and lawn fertilizer runoff contribute to the growth of pond weeds, the major culprit is fanwort.

According to the studies, "the non-native fanwort is the primary problem plant, achieving great densities over most of the pond area and impairing both habitat value and recreational use of the pond."

Conducted by Fugro East, Inc., a Northborough environmental consulting and engineering firm, the two studies cost a total of \$30,000, \$10,000 of which was provided by a state grant.

In the reports, Fugro East said

Duxbury

both Island Creek and Lower Chandler were shallow ponds with "substantial deposits of organic muck sediment."

Fugro East recommendations are expected to be used to eliminate or control the growth of fanwort in the two ponds.

However, since the 39-acre Lower Chandler Pond straddles the Duxbury-Pembroke line, Pembroke must help solve the problem there.

So far, Pembroke officials have shown little willingness to get involved, Grady said.

"We're continuing to try to spark some interest in the town of Pembroke," he said.

Because all 38 acres of Island Creek Pond are in Duxbury, efforts to eliminate the fanwort there got underway last summer, Grady said.

Grady said a mechanical harvester, similar to a large lawnmower, was used to clean up Island Creek.

As a result, the town's recreation department was able to resume a summer sailing program at Island

Creek.

Fugro East said the most effective way to get rid of fanwort in the two ponds is to use the herbicide Sonar.

However, because Island Creek water is used to irrigate three adjacent cranberry bogs, one of which is owned by the town, a herbicide cannot be used there, Grady said.

"At Island Creek, I recommend harvesting the fanwort," he said, a solution that will cost an estimated \$10,000 every two years.

At Lower Chandler, assuming Pembroke will go along, Grady said he'll urge the use of Sonar, at a cost of \$16,000 — \$8,000 from each town — which should be good for three years.

An alternative might be to drain Lower Chandler every winter, he said.

In addition, Grady said, he'll seek funds to monitor the two ponds regularly and to educate area residents about how to maintain a healthy pond.

Duxbury selectmen have scheduled a public meeting on Jan. 22 to review the Fugro East studies and Grady's recommendations. Residents of the two pond areas and Pembroke officials will be invited to attend.